



Beach project awaits bond approval

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HARVEY CEDARS -- A beach replenishment project slated to begin on Sept. 30 has been put on hold as the Army Corps of Engineers awaits bond approval.

Merv Brokke, spokesperson for the Corps, said the delay was unavoidable.

"These are just some normal processes that need to be worked out. There weren't any problems with the actual project. Everything as far as that is moving according to plan," he said.

Brokke said the Corps is unsure when trucks will begin carting sand, but said the future of the project is not in jeopardy.

"It's difficult to say when exactly the project is going to start, but we don't see this as a serious hold-up," he said.

Typically, the Corps gives a contractor a 30-day period to start a project. Brokke said it is then up to the company to decide when to begin.

"(Construction) can start any time during that window so I would anticipate this starting soon," said Brokke.

In addition to bond approval, the Corps is still negotiating a final contract with Environmental, Engineering and Construction, Inc.

The original start date was chosen in order to begin construction during the 2005 fiscal year and increase the chance that the replenishment project will continue to receive funding from the federal government in the future.

Congressman Jim Saxton, who pushed for the project to be included in the 2006 Water and Energy Bill Appropriations Bill, said it is important for the project to be considered ongoing.

"This is a multi-year project and I must look to the future to find ways to keep funding coming beyond 2006," Saxton said in a statement. "The Army Corps of Engineers is already preparing its 2007 budget and I want to see the LBI project on schedule and ready to make real progress."

Brokke says because of the original start date, the project will be considered ongoing when it comes time to map out the upcoming budget.

"Even though the first bit of work has not started, because the contract was

awarded during the 2005 fiscal year, it would be considered ongoing, and those are the projects that we typically like to see continue," he said.

Daina Dale, Harvey Cedars borough clerk, said the town is confident the project will come to fruition, but has little control over the construction start date.

"If the Corps isn't ready yet, there isn't anything we can do; it is their project. But it does not change anything from our part. We are all anxious for it to start," she said.

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